

Module 12

LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

Language in Use



THE COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING

General Education Modules
for Upper Primary and Junior Secondary School Teachers
of Science, Technology and Mathematics by Distance
in the Southern African Development Community (SADC)

Developed by

The Southern African Development Community

Ministries of Education in:

- Botswana
- Malawi
- Mozambique
- Namibia
- South Africa
- Tanzania
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

In partnership with The Commonwealth of Learning

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GENERAL EDUCATION MODULES

This module is one of a series prepared under the auspices of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and The Commonwealth of Learning as part of the Science, Technology and Mathematics Programme (STAMP 2000+). These General Education modules enable teachers to enhance their professional skills through distance and open learning. Many individuals and groups have been involved in writing and producing these modules. We trust that they will benefit not only the teachers who use them, but also, ultimately, their students and the communities and nations in which they live.

The eighteen General Education modules are as follows:

- Module 1: *Multigrade Teaching: Introduction to Multigrade Teaching*
- Module 2: *Multigrade Teaching: Classroom Organisation and Management*
- Module 3: *The Reading Process*
- Module 4: *Developing Reading Skills*
- Module 5: *Special Educational Needs: An Introduction to Teaching Traumatised Children*
- Module 6: *Special Educational Needs: A Practical Guide to Teaching Traumatised Children*
- Module 7: *Education Management Development: Part A*
- Module 8: *Education Management Development: Part B*
- Module 9: *Child Development*
- Module 10: *Concepts of Learning*
- Module 11: *An Introduction to Concepts in Language and Communication*
- Module 12: *Language and Communication: Language in Use*
- Module 13: *Curriculum Theory, Design and Assessment*
- Module 14: *Curriculum Practice*
- Module 15: *A Theoretical Framework on Innovations in Education*
- Module 16: *Effects of Social Changes on Education*
- Module 17: *Comparative Education: Introduction to Key Concepts in Comparative Education*
- Module 18: *Comparative Education: Themes and Trends in Comparative Education in SADC Countries*

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF LEARNING



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LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

Language in Use

It has been observed that most of our newly appointed teachers and the untrained teachers in the Southern African Development Community need assistance in the teaching approaches that take into account individual differences in children. It is for this reason that this module was developed. It is our hope that you will use the content of this module to help you with your duties as a teacher.

This module focuses on language and communication and should be completed after you have studied Module 11.

CONTENTS

Learning Tips	5
Unit 1: Communication Contexts	7
Language and Context	
Communication Contexts	
Why Do We Communicate Differently in Different Situations?	
Unit 2: Language, Communication and Culture	14
Introduction to Culture	
Relationships between Language, Communication and Culture	
Cross-Cultural Communication	
Culture in the Classroom	
Unit 3: Language and Change	21
Definition of Pidgin and Creole	
Why Do Languages Change?	
Language and Change	
Unit 4: Language and Emerging Issues	28
Population Education	
Language and Gender	
Environmental Education	
HIV/AIDS	
Human Rights	
Unit 5: The Process of Language Learning	40
Key Components in Language Learning	
The Process of Learning a Language	
Factors That Make Learning a Language Difficult	
About Errors That Language Learners Make	
Individual Differences and Their Impact on Language Learning	

Unit 6: Language Planning, Literacy and Education	48
Reasons for Language Planning	
The Language Planning Process	
The Standard Language Uses	
Language Policy	
Language Policy and Literacy	
Problems Faced by Linguistic Minorities	
Language in Education	
Attitude and Motivation	
Unit 7: Communication in the Classroom.....	56
An Introduction to Classroom Communication	
The Use of Language in Classroom Interaction	
Affective Communication in the Classroom	
How to Develop Effective Attending Behaviours	
Lesson Presentation Skills	
Using Teaching and Learning Aids and Resources	
Unit 8: Identifying Communication Problems in the School.....	70
The School as an Organisational Structure	
How Is Information Passed?	
Face-to-Face Communication	
The Teacher	
Method of Communicating	
The Pupil	
The Results of Poor Communication	
Grapevine	
Module Test	81
References	82

LEARNING TIPS

You will find the following tips helpful as you study this module.

- **Set aside some time each day to work on this module.** If possible, study at the same time and in the same place so you are comfortable with your study surroundings. Learning at a distance requires discipline and motivation.
- **Go through the module unit by unit.**
- **Note any words you do not understand.** Look them up in a dictionary or other reference source or discuss them with your colleagues.
- **Underline or highlight important passages.** Make summary notes in the margins of long passages. Writing will help you to remember the material. You may also choose to make diagrams that illustrate how different ideas are related or list the steps in a procedure or technique.
- As you work through this module, **keep in mind your learners and their educational needs** as well as your instructional goals and your subject matter. How will you apply what you are learning?
- Read the assignment instructions carefully. Then, **do all the self-assessment activities** before proceeding to the Suggested Answers section.
- **As you undertake each activity, relate it to the practice of teaching** and analyse how it will help you to enhance the teaching-learning situation. Always ask yourself how you could use this material.
- **Apply some of the suggested techniques to your teaching.** All suggestions may not be appropriate for your situation, but how will you know unless you try them? Keep a record of what techniques work and an explanation of why some techniques appeared to fail. What does not work now may work later with different students.
- It may be difficult, but try to **meet occasionally with other teachers** to discuss the content and application of suggestions provided in this module.
- If you experience difficulty in understanding some aspect of the module, do not despair! You are meant to be challenged. **Do not give up!** Just remember that your goal is to be the best teacher that you can be. Think of what you would tell a student who was experiencing difficulty in your classroom. Then, apply the same advice to yourself.

ICONS

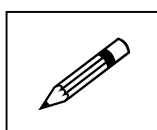
Throughout each module, you will find the following icons or graphic symbols that alert you to a change in activity within the module. Only the icons that are required are used in each module.



Text or Reading Material: provides information about the topics that are covered in a module. The subject matter for each SADC module is organised into units.



Introductory Activity: requires you to focus on the content that will be discussed in a unit.



Self-Assessment: enables you to check your understanding of what you have read and, in some cases, to apply the information presented in the unit to new situations.



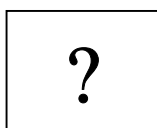
Practice Activity: encourages you to review and apply what you have learned before taking a unit test.



Reflection: asks you to relate what you have learned to your work as a teacher or education officer in your community.



Summary: highlights or provides an overview of the most important points covered in a unit.



Unit Test: concludes each unit.



Suggested Answers: allow you to evaluate your learning by providing sample answers to assessments, activities, and the unit test.

UNIT 1: Communication Contexts



Introduction

After completing Module 11, you should now be familiar with the elements of communication, namely, the sender, the message, the system, the language and the receiver. In this unit, we will explore another element of communication, the context of communication.

In our daily interactions, we find ourselves in different situations and have to adapt not only our behaviour but also, more importantly, how we use language. Therefore, the overall aim of this unit is to introduce you to different communication contexts and how these determine the language you use for effective communication.

Objectives

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

1. Discuss how register affects communication.
2. Identify different communication contexts.
3. Give reasons for communicating differently in different situations.

Language and Context

Language varies according to the user. Age, gender, origin and the social class of the individual all affect language use. The context of where, when and how people learn language often determines the way they use it throughout life.

Consider the following quotation from Wallwork (1982: 99):

Most of us speak quite differently when we speak to different people, to a child, to a friend or to a supervisor at work. We even speak differently to the same person when we meet him in different circumstances.

The above passage demonstrates how context affects language and which language we use. We use different words and tone to suit the situation in which we find ourselves. Certain levels of language are considered appropriate in particular circumstances. Wallwork (1982: 107) provides three sentences about someone talking to his wife, colleague and supervisor, respectively:

- “Met that fool John today. Wants his job back – can you imagine?”

- “Do you remember John Jones? I met him today, and he said he’d like his job back. I think he is optimistic, don’t you?”
- “I met Mr Jones yesterday, sir, who used to work here if you remember. He asked me to inquire whether his post was still open and whether there was any chance of his taking it up again. I said I would pass the message on, sir.”

The three statements above contain the same factual information. However, the difference lies in the manner in which the information is conveyed. The **register**, or level of language, adopted by the speaker in each sentence varies depending on the relationship between the speaker and the audience.

Context may also affect which language is used. For example, a student might use English to a lecturer, Setswana to a friend and Ikalanga to a family member. Each language is used to achieve a different purpose.

Language is dynamic. Therefore, we need to adopt the descriptive approach as opposed to the traditional prescriptive approach. Language varies according to:

- what you are talking about,
- how you say it, and
- where you are.

For example, if you spoke in class as you would in a pub, you would be considered rude.

Language variations according to the user. The language used is determined by the characteristics of the user, such as age, sex, origin and social class. These determine the user’s dialect.

Language variations according to use. While dialect depends on the characteristics of the user, register has to do with the use of the language. This register is divided into three categories:

- tenor,
- mode, and
- domain.

Tenor deals with the relationship between the speaker and the addressee in a given situation. For example, if someone shouts, “Get out of here!” it would signal some strained relationship. On the other hand, if someone says, “Could you please wait for me outside?” this shows some cordial relationship between the speaker and the addressee.

Mode refers to the actual medium of transmitting information. It refers to both verbal and non-verbal communication.

Domain refers to the way language varies according to the activity in which it plays a part. For example, the language used in court, in advertisements and in church serves different purposes.

Communication Contexts

These will be discussed under three categories: psychological, organisational and socio-cultural contexts.

Psychological Context

This kind of communication context is determined by the relationship between the speaker and the audience or addressee. The relationship may be a new one or a pre-existing one. For example, a supervisor says to the subordinate, “Come to my office.” This might mean that the subordinate has been warned before. The psychological context is therefore one of tension.

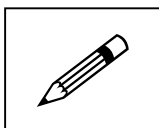
Organisational Context

Organisational context refers to the culture of an organisation. It must be stressed that organisational culture in this case refers to the good relationships and networks that are a result of shared norms, values and aspirations. The successful accomplishment of goals in formal organisations depends very much on the communication practices employed.

Communication of information in organisations may flow in several directions: upward, downward and laterally. **Downward flow** of communication tends to carry authority and may seem more efficient in some organisations; however, too much reliance on downward flow may produce a closed organisational culture in which subordinates feel they have no power. **Upward flow** of communication occurs in organisations where power is shared more often; subordinates feel that they can contribute to problem-solving in an organisational culture that is relatively open. **Lateral flow** of communication forms part of the informal network of gossip and discussion in an organisation, or it may be part of the formal network of teamwork and cooperative decision making.

Socio-Cultural Context

The cultural implications of communication were discussed in detail in Unit 7 of Module 11. What is being emphasised here is that we need to employ the appropriate language in a given culture.



Self-Assessment 1

Study the three quotations about Mr John Jones cited at the beginning of the unit. Discuss the similarities and differences between the statements.

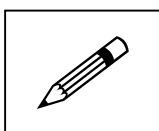
Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



Why Do We Communicate Differently in Different Situations?

The effect of language is determined by the way it is used. Language varies according to the situation in which it is used, the communication context. We need to communicate differently in different situations in order to:

- avoid communication breakdown,
- be clearly understood,
- be relevant, and
- avoid offending others.



Self-Assessment 2

Show how the use of appropriate language in certain situations is particularly relevant in your work. Give examples.

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



Practice Activity

What kind of language would you use in the following situations?

<i>Situation</i>	<i>Language</i>
Morning assembly at school	
Talking to friends at a reception or party	
Keynote address at a conference	
Talking to a colleague about a weekend game	
Talking to your neighbour about a birthday party	
Requesting a transfer from your supervisor	

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



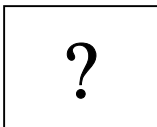
Summary

This unit has examined the various contexts in which language can be used. These contexts depend on the characteristics of the speaker, on the relationship between the speaker and the audience, on the speaker's intention, and on the situation in which they find themselves. It is important to use appropriate language in a given situation so as to improve understanding and avoid not only communication breakdown, but also the confusion and frustration that are counter-productive in an organisation. We hope that you find the ideas discussed in this unit relevant to your work and that you will reflect on them as you interact with your colleagues and students.



Reflection

Think of an incident when you communicated the same information to three people in different ways. Why did you have to change your style when you gave the same information to the three people?



Unit Test

Discuss how the following are important in communication:

- psychological context,
- organisational context, and
- socio-cultural context.

Possible answers to this test are provided at the end of this unit.



Suggested Answers

Self-Assessment 1

The similarity among all three messages is that each message contained the same information about Mr John Jones wanting to return to his former job.

The differences between the messages are noted below.

- The first quotation uses very informal language. The sarcastic tone shows an informal and close relationship between the speaker and addressee.
- The second quotation uses rather informal language. The speaker is talking to a colleague of similar status.
- The third quotation uses very formal language, as the individual is speaking with a supervisor.

Self-Assessment 2

Language use will vary according to the situation. For example, when giving instructions or reprimanding students, the language you use is most likely to be formal. The language may be informal when you tell the students a story.

Language will also vary depending upon the subject matter being taught. For example, when discussing advertisements, an accident, a court scene or the rules of a game, the language and vocabulary must be appropriate for the pupils and the subject matter.

Practice Activity

The kinds of language that would be used in the situations described in the table are specified below.

<i>Situation</i>	<i>Language</i>
Morning assembly at school	Formal language
Talking to friends at a reception or party	Informal and/or formal language
Keynote address at a conference	Formal language
Talking to a colleague about a weekend game	Informal language
Talking to your neighbour about a birthday party	Informal or familiar language
Requesting a transfer from your supervisor	Formal language

Unit Test

The three communication contexts:

- Psychological: communication is clear, appropriate and relevant if the relationship between the speaker and the addressee or audience is recognised.
- Organisational: organisational culture refers to appropriate norms, values and behaviours as well as how these are reflected in the information flow within the organisation.
- Socio-cultural: this refers to the use of language that is relevant to a given cultural situation.

UNIT 2: Language, Communication and Culture



Introduction

In Module 11, we discussed language and communication. In this unit, we will link language and communication to culture. The following questions will help us focus our discussion.

- What is culture?
- What is the relationship between language and culture?
- Is language a determining factor in the way we perceive the world?

Objectives

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

1. Define culture.
2. Discuss the relationship between language, communication and culture.
3. Discuss the importance of culture in the classroom.

Introduction to Culture

Culture is a complex concept that is widely used in a variety of fields such as sociology, economics and anthropology. In this unit, however, we will focus on the relevance of culture in human interactions.

Culture has been defined as:

the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief or behaviour that depends upon man's capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to successive generations.
(*Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, 1987: 314)

The entire pattern of behaviour and beliefs of a group of people. (Serfert, 1983: 125)

The sum of language, values, beliefs, habits and practice shared by a large group of people.
(Book et al., 1980: 20)

All aspects of shared life in a community.
(Rivers, 1981: 316)

You will notice that the definitions express the following:

- shared life;
- behaviour, beliefs and values; and
- a group of people or a community.

The characteristics above are the focal point of the cultural context of communication.

Relationships between Language, Communication and Culture

It is difficult to separate language from the culture in which it is embedded. The definition of culture includes language as an aspect of culture because it is acquired by an individual as a member of society.

People learn a language along with the ways, attitudes and beliefs of the social group, and these are expressed through language. Hence we say language is an integral part of the social system. The language that people learn as children dictates what should and should not be said, and where and when to say it.

As members of a particular society or group, children learn, among other things:

- what people in that culture value,
- how they act,
- how they perceive the world, and
- how they express what they think.

These attitudes, reactions and unspoken assumptions become part of people's lives without them being conscious of them. Features that are determined by culture may be recognised in people's actions, social relationships, morals and even through the art and literature which members of the group produce and appreciate. The San paintings are an example of an expression of a way of life.

Communication and culture complement each other; the values, common language and shared historical experiences are transmitted within and between generations through communication. Communication therefore is influenced by culture. For example, folktales, proverbs and idioms that are used to teach morals and values are passed on from generation to generation.

In many cultures, there are rules that govern the interactions of people. These show the agreements shared by most members of a particular culture. For example, when two people exchange greetings, there may be a sequence that is to be followed. If it is disrupted, the cultural rules may be violated. Cultural rules

strongly influence the content of many messages. You have rules that must be followed in your classroom. If these are violated, different interpretations of the content may occur, resulting in a breakdown in the flow of communication.

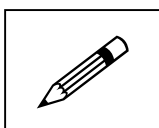
Cross-Cultural Communication

As complex as communication can be within a single culture, that complexity is multiplied many times over in cross-cultural communication. The differences in attitudes, beliefs and experiences in different cultures may produce a wide range of acceptable communication practices.

There are differences that occur across cultures that may affect both verbal and non-verbal communication.

Non-Verbal Communication. In some cultures, people are very conscious of their personal space. If someone moves too close to them, their reaction is to move further away. The two people will then interpret each other's actions differently. The one who is moving away may be thought of as cold or aloof. The person who is trying to move closer may be thought as being pushy or inconsiderate. This difference in response will therefore hinder communication.

Verbal Communication. In many cultures, children are expected to remain silent and respectful in the company of adults. In other cultures, it may be perfectly normal for children to say "you are a liar" to parents.



Self-Assessment 1

What is the relationship between language and culture?

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



Culture in the Classroom

Do you think we should expose our students to different cultures in our classrooms? Think about this question while you read through this section.

The definition of culture emphasises beliefs, behaviour and living within a community or group. Your students are part of a community and, as such, identify with a certain culture or cultures. However, they also exist in a national and global community and must learn to accept other cultures. As a teacher, you should develop in your students the skills, knowledge, information, attitudes and habits leading to the following qualities:

- Self-realisation. As students read, their intellectual curiosity is aroused and satisfied. They may also be motivated to pursue other interests.

- A sense of civic responsibility. Students learn to be good citizens as they learn about their own and other governments and the rights and responsibilities of citizens.
- An awareness of the importance of the world of work.
- An insight into the complexities of human relationships.

Well-prepared teachers bring an awareness of cultural meaning into every aspect of their teaching and students absorb this perspective. Some will absorb more than others.

As a teacher, you can effectively develop cultural insights and respect for other cultures through a variety of activities. When students are engaged in these activities, they communicate the values of their cultures with each other as well as with their teacher.

When introducing cultural activities in your classroom, consider following some of the suggestions below:

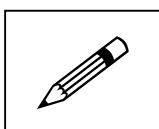
- A bulletin board could include newspaper or magazine clippings of current national and international events.
- Use audio- and videotapes so that your students can listen to presentations made by native speakers and note how they use language to convey messages. These audiovisual materials can be used to demonstrate similarities and differences in the ways that different cultures act and speak.
- Display maps can show physical, economic and geographic features as well as the relationships between countries and the location of important cities, monuments and places of interest.
- Integrate the students' new knowledge about other cultures with what they have already learned.
- Elderly people from the community should be invited to the class to make presentations on cultural topics. The history and beliefs of many cultures are not written down anywhere, but they reside in the memories of our elders.
- Encourage cultural exchanges that provide opportunities for students to recount stories and explain their cultural context.
- Use dialogue and role play to help students learn language structure and culture and to practise social customs which differ between communities.

Pupils operate within a range of cultural contexts that may include the home, school, playground, street and classroom. These contexts require children to use different languages, to follow different cultural rules and to play different social roles.

For example, they can learn how to address others and express friendship, gratitude and sadness. When these pupils come to the classroom, they mix languages in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary and syntax. In the past, the mixing of languages resulted in 'errors' that the teacher corrected. Currently, linguists are describing this mixing as both an active process and a feature of cultural identity. They argue that multilingual children may use the blending of languages as a means of defining their cultural identity.

It is important to integrate cultural elements into every aspect of learning. Both you and your students have an opportunity to learn more than just the language. You should be willing to join with the students and together inquire about your own and other cultures.

If you fail to draw your students' attention to the reasons for cultural differences and discuss their implications, you allow misconceptions to develop and be perpetuated in the students' minds. If this happens, students can show disrespect and hostility towards other cultures.



Self-Assessment 2

Why should you introduce cultural elements in your classroom?
How would you do this?

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



Summary

This unit discussed language, communication and culture. We looked at the relationship between language and culture and the importance of culture in the classroom. This unit provided numerous suggestions that will help you introduce cultural activities into your classroom.



Reflection

Have you considered including cultural elements in your teaching? Have you considered the cultural diversity of your students when teaching? If not, how are you going to accommodate this diversity in your next classes?



Practice Activity

Make a list of cultural differences that you may find among students in your class.

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.

?

Unit Test

You were passing by a classroom, and overheard one of your colleagues interrogating a pupil who had missed his class the previous day. He was shouting at the student, “Don’t be rude. Look me in the eye when I talk to you.”

What do you think was the reason for the breakdown in communication?

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



Suggested Answers

Self-Assessment 1

Language and culture are bound together. Language is an essential part of the culture. When you learn a language, culture dictates to you what you should and should not say.

Self-Assessment 2

Pupils may operate under different cultural contexts. They have to appreciate each other's cultures in order to live and work in the same communities.

In order to introduce cultural elements in your classroom, you could:

- mount displays on bulletin boards,
- use visual and audio material so that students could hear and see other cultures,
- invite elderly persons in the community to speak to the pupils or help them with projects, and
- use dialogues and role plays to help your students understand other languages and behaviours.

Practice Activity

With a class, there may be a variety of cultural differences, including differences in:

- religion,
- sports,
- dress,
- behaviour, and
- language.

Unit Test

The breakdown in communication was probably due to cross-cultural differences. The teacher was not familiar with the culture of the pupil.

In the teacher's culture, direct eye contact is very important when someone is speaking to you.

In the student's culture, children should not look directly at someone older if they are being reprimanded because this is a sign of disrespect.

Therefore, there was a conflict of cultures between the teacher and the student.

UNIT 3: Language and Change



Introduction

By now, you should be familiar with the concept of language and the role it plays in communication. Having also explored the contents of communication in Module 11, you should be able to see the relationship between language and change.

The aim of this unit is to examine how language changes with developments and time. A language is continually changing in terms of sound patterns, meanings and grammatical patterns. Since the field of language and linguistics is so broad, we can only sensitise you to the basic issues in language and change. Although examples used in this unit are drawn from the English language, you may be aware of some local examples that show how language is undergoing changes.

Objectives

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

1. Define a pidgin language.
2. Define a creole language.
3. Distinguish between a pidgin language and a Creole language.
4. Give reasons why languages change.
5. Discuss some changes that languages have undergone.

Definition of Pidgin and Creole

It is important to discuss pidgin and creole languages because they are a result of changes and developments in a language.

According to Fasold (1994), a **pidgin** is a simplified language that mostly uses grammar from one language and uses vocabulary from both the local language and from the contact language. A pidgin develops in cases where there is interaction between two groups of people, frequently in a trade or business situation, and neither speaks the language of the other. Both groups contribute to the sounds, vocabulary and grammar of the language. A pidgin language has small, simplified structures because of its narrow range of use. Examples of pidgin languages are those that developed in the American plantations during the slave trade. Since the slaves did not have a common language, they had to develop a language that was particular to their situation. Another example is Tok Pisin from Papua New Guinea, which is a trade language for people living in a country with over 800 distinct languages.

A **creole** language develops when a pidgin language becomes the native language of a new generation. As a result, children learn it as their first language. A creole language may be the result of the marriage between people who speak different languages and who both know a pidgin, but neither acquires the language of the other. Creoles differ from pidgin languages in that they have a range of functions and a full range of grammatical structures. They can express a range of thoughts in complex ways. Thus creoles can express a full range of meanings, whereas pidgins are limited in the amount of meaning they can convey.



Self-Assessment 1

Discuss the differences and similarities between a pidgin language and a creole language.

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



Why Do Languages Change?

Consider the following quotation by Milroy (1992: 1):

One of the most important factors about human language is that it is continuously changing.

Language is in a continuous state of change. Old versions of a language are fading away, new ones are appearing.

Pronunciations change, and new words and constructions are invented or adopted, while other words and constructions fall into disuse. The question is, “Why is language continually changing?” Following are some of the explanations for why languages change.

- **Changing individual need.** Language development is a process that moves from acquisition to mastering a language and adapting it to suit the users’ needs. Users start with simple structures and progressively use more complex structures. Where there are two forms or expressions, one form may be adopted, hence the change.
- **Changing technology.** Due to technological advances, language may be coined or borrowed. For instance, the word ‘television’ did not exist until the invention of television itself. Think about the appearance of the computer and its associated terminology. For example, we have computer-based terms such as ‘boot’, ‘click’, ‘trash’ and ‘menu’. In the world of technology, these words convey meanings particular to the computer. You may be able to think of other technology-related terms that have made their way into our daily life, such as the

phrase “that does not compute”, which means “that does not make sense”.

- **Changing social status.** Sometimes, expressions are changed so that they can be used in different social contexts. For example, at one time the word ‘lady’ only indicated a woman with high social status. Now we have the terms ‘cleaning lady’ and ‘lady of the night’.
- **Socio-cultural change.** Unit 1 of this module discussed language as a social phenomenon used by speakers to communicate in social and cultural contexts. If an expression is no longer considered useful in a given context, a new one may be adopted to suit the circumstances. In this way, a new expression enters the vocabulary of the language.
- **Changes in style and taste.** Speakers change the way they use the language in different situations. As a result, several forms of saying the same thing may co-exist, each serving a different function. A new linguistic form may be used so frequently that it replaces the old one.

Language and Change

Fronklin and Rodman (1983: 279) have observed that “all languages change with time”. The English language is no exception. As noted earlier, language is changing in a number of ways, including changing its sound, grammatical structures and meanings.

- **Sound or phonological changes.** Sound changes in language are unavoidable. There are cases where one dialect undergoes a sound shift faster than others, so is not useful to all people. Look at the following examples in English:

<i>Original Sound</i>	<i>Current Sound</i>
mūs	mouse
hūs	house
út	out

- **Pronunciation change.** The pronunciation of words has also been changing with times. For example, English no longer has the morpheme *x*. This is shown by the following examples:

<i>Original Word</i>	<i>Current Word</i>
nixt	night
druxt	drought
saux	saw

- **Morphological change and syntactic change.** ‘Morphology’ refers to words and parts of words, while

‘syntax’ refers to their grammatical arrangement. The words and the rules that govern their use are changing. For example, the distinction between the use of the pronouns ‘who’ and ‘whom’ is fading away. The two are used interchangeably. For example:

“I am sure **whom** to give the money to.”

“I am sure **who** to give the money to.”

- **Semantic change.** Language also undergoes changes in meaning by broadening, narrowing or shifting.

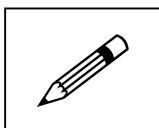
- *Broadening.* The meaning of some words is expanded past the original meaning. Consider the following examples of broadening:

Word	Original Meaning
holiday	holy day
butcher	to slaughter goats
companion	person you share bread with

- *Narrowing.* Some words have changed their meanings from being general to being specific. For example, the word ‘deer’ originally meant ‘beast’ or ‘animal’, and the words ‘ox’, ‘calf’, ‘pig’ and ‘sheep’ meant the meat of these animals as well as the animals themselves.

- *Shifting.* There are cases where some words have shifted their original meaning. For example, the words ‘bread’ and ‘knight’ originally meant ‘prayer’ and ‘youth’, respectively.

- **Borrowing.** Borrowing occurs when two languages are frequently in contact with each other. In this process of borrowing, words from another language become part of the acceptable vocabulary.



Self-Assessment 2

Which of the aspects of language change discussed above do you think could affect your teaching?

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



Practice Activity

Give an example of a task you would assign your students to enable them to explore the concept of language change.

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



Summary

This unit introduced you to the basics of language and change. We examined the reasons for and the process of language change and development. It was noted that borrowing and shifting of words results in pidgin language and that a pidgin language may develop into creole, thereby becoming a native tongue of a community. We noted that languages grow and adapt to socio-cultural environments. As stated at the beginning of this unit, the field of linguistics is so broad that we could write a whole book on the subject. However, we hope that the ideas discussed in this unit will influence the factors you consider in teaching language and when communicating with your students.



Reflection

Think of examples of how your language has been influenced by borrowing, broadening, narrowing or shifting.



Unit Test

1. Give reasons why language changes.
2. Give the current meaning of the following words: holiday, butcher, ox, bread, companion, calf and knight. Identify the type of change in meaning that has occurred.

Possible answers to these questions are given at the end of this unit.



Suggested Answers

Self-Assessment 1

The differences between pidgin and creole are outlined below.

Pidgin languages:

- use the grammatical structure of a local language,
- borrow vocabulary from the contact languages,
- serve a narrow purpose of communication, and
- are used by people who do not speak each other's language.

Creole languages:

- are the result of a pidgin language becoming the native language of a community,
- have a broad range of vocabulary and grammar to suit speech situations,
- are used by the new generation,
- have extensive vocabulary structures, and
- are permanent languages.

The similarities between pidgin and creole include the following:

- both are a result of contact between two or more languages, and
- both grow out of the need to communicate in a given situation.

Self-Assessment 2

The following aspects of language change frequently affect teaching:

- semantic change that results from the broadening, narrowing or shifting of the language; and
- borrowed meanings and words, particularly those borrowed from mass media.

Practice Activity

In order to help students explore the concept of language change, you could ask them to:

- list words and expressions that are currently in use but were not used in the past, and
- explain what such words and expressions mean.

Unit Test

1. Languages are changing continually because people change as they acquire new knowledge and skills and interact with different people. Language may change due to:

- simple structures becoming more complex,
- technological developments that require new words and meanings,
- shifts that occur when certain words are no longer associated with particular social classes,
- socio-cultural pressures that force speakers to eliminate or adopt new words to be used in different contexts, and
- language variations that occur when speakers frequently use a word in a new context.

2.

<i>Word</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Type of change</i>
holiday	break, leave, vacation	broadening
butcher	to kill people or animals in a cruel way	broadening
ox	used for pulling carts	narrowing
bread	food made of flour, water and yeast	shifting
companion	friend, fellow	broadening
calf	a young cow	narrowing
knight	a man with rank of honour	shifting

UNIT 4: Language and Emerging Issues



Introduction

Society is dynamic. Language therefore changes in order to accommodate new developments. In this unit, you will explore the relationship between language and emerging issues. Although there are many emerging issues, this unit focuses on the following:

- population
- gender
- environmental education
- HIV/AIDS
- human rights.

A close look at the issues will show that each topic has such a wide scope that they cannot be covered adequately in one unit. Therefore, we only seek to sensitise you to these issues without going into detail. We also want to illustrate how language and communication can be used to discuss and teach these issues. Finally, the unit suggests ways to integrate these issues into the curriculum. In all cases, the importance of language as a vehicle for communication will be emphasised. The examples used are from the English language. However, the principles covered in this unit apply to all languages.

Objectives

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

1. State the main concerns of each of the emerging issues.
2. Suggest ways of integrating the issues into the curriculum.
3. Formulate methods for teaching about these issues.

Population Education

Ask yourself the question, “Why do I teach population education?” List your answers. You may find that you have some of the following reasons on your list:

- To make students aware of population control measures.
- To discuss the benefits of small families.
- To combat illiteracy.
- To discuss the merits of resource sharing and allocation.
- To control the rapid growth of urbanisation.
- To reduce air and water pollution.

- To reduce housing shortages.
- To manage water supply and sanitation.

The above is only a partial list of the many possible reasons. We hope it will encourage you to think of other reasons for discussing the effects of population growth. The reasons given show that the subject is important and relevant and so deserves a place in the curriculum.

The Korean Education Development, as cited by Bishop (1986: 112), suggests that:

In connection with the curriculum, considering that rapid population growth and increasing urbanisation are seen to act as constraints on the provision of education...an essential response of this state of affairs should be to include in the curriculum a strong component of population education....

The above quotation underscores the importance of including population education in the curriculum.

At this point you might ask, what is the role of language in population education and the curriculum? To answer this question, let us look at why some attempts at population education have failed.

Studies conducted in India demonstrate that efforts by the government to decrease the rate of population growth failed. The following strategies were used:

- compulsory sterilisation,
- optional sterilisation,
- distribution of free condoms, and
- cash incentives and rewards for small families.

The main reasons the above strategies failed were that the government did not address people's:

- wishes,
- beliefs,
- customs, and
- traditions.

Bishop (1986: 113) states:

The failure of power – coercive strategies – in India emphasises the need to consider the user system if any innovation is to be successful.

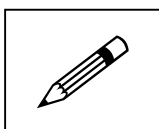
It is in this context that you will find a role for language and communication. Language can help in this situation under the following conditions:

- Positive language is used. For example, public health posters might say “It is a great joy to have children, but only if they are healthy and happy” instead of “Do not have too many children.”
- Family planning is treated as health care for the mother and child instead of as a birth control measure.
- Posters or other forms of mass communication are used to tell a story or portray a positive image. For example, a poster showing a small family of three or fewer children all looking healthy and happy conveys a positive message about a future lifestyle.
- Television and other mass media are used to show the advantages of small families, such as living in decent housing and having well-fed and educated children.
- People are left to make their own choice.

Through the use of appropriate language, you can help your learners to understand that:

- family size can be controlled, and
- a small family can achieve a higher standard of living than a large family.

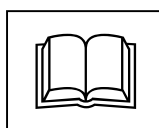
The case study cited above should help you understand that the negative language of force will not work. Persuasive, positive and friendly language can obtain the desired results.



Self-Assessment 1

What can you do in your community to make people aware of the problems that are caused by rapid population growth?

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



Language and Gender

Think of words and expressions that are associated with gender. Have you heard or read the following terms?

- gender balance
- gender equity
- gender sensitivity
- gender equality
- gender bias
- gender responsiveness.

The above words should help you to realise the current trends in gender issues. When we discuss gender, you must bear in mind that it is not an abstract concept, but rather a real issue. The situation in your class and in your school can help to bring the issue closer to home. Here again are some aspects you might look at:

- the number of girls in your class and in the school;
- the number of boys in your class and in the school;
- the numbers of boys and girls who complete or graduate from the school;
- the numbers of male and female teachers in your school; and
- the numbers of female and male teachers who are in promotion grades or hold positions of responsibility.

In most cases, you will have observed that the gender bias is in favour of boys and men. Reardon (1987: 162) states:

The paucity of female sports, the male bias of many social clubs, and the greater comfort men feel when out alone all serve to limit female socialisation.

Allen (1979), as cited in Reardon (1987), sees this lack of female participation in various activities as the “central element of continuing male domination”.

Let us examine some of the ways in which language is used to reinforce gender bias. Read the following expressions that are used at home and at school.

- Boys don’t cry.
- How can you be beaten by a girl? (Stated when a girl scores the highest mark in a test.)
- She is a real man! (Stated when a female does something outstanding.)
- right-hand man
- a man of the people
- action man
- manhandle
- mankind
- tomboy
- He is not man enough for the job.

The list is endless. You can think of more expressions. What we learn from the above is that gender bias is built into our language. Now that you are aware of this bias, you should make efforts to rectify the situation.

Can you find words that are gender neutral to replace those in the above list?

The following is another illustration of how language is used to promote gender bias.

Did you realise that many girls' names in the English language are based on boys' names? Consider the following: Paul-Pauline-Paula-Paulette. Or Antony-Antoinette. Lots of girls' names are formed by adding endings to boys' names. In the English language, these endings are usually -line, -a, -e, -elle and -ina. See how many names you can find that are based on boys' names.

Gender bias in English naming extends to surnames as well. Have you ever heard of anyone called Claire Ruthdaughter or William Johndaughter? Perhaps not. But there may well be someone in your school called Claire Johnson or Michael Neilson because there are many surnames like this in English that mean 'son of x'. In these two examples, Claire is 'son of John' and Michael is 'son of Neil'. No doubt, you'll be able to think of similar examples. But why are there not any surnames that mean 'daughter of x'? In Iceland, a culture exists that has for centuries allowed women to own property and to keep their surnames after marriage. There, for instance, Vigidis Jakobsdottir means 'Vigidis, daughter of Jakob'.

The issue of gender affects almost every aspect of our lives. Mass media continue to distribute images that portray a gender bias. On television, men are generally portrayed as:

- strong,
- aggressive,
- intelligent,
- sophisticated,
- adventurous,
- brave,
- challenging, and
- innovative.

Women are portrayed frequently as:

- weak, frail and soft;
- needing protection from men;
- uneducated;
- lacking in sophistication;
- timid;

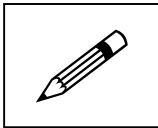
- lacking in courage; and
- without initiative.

The above lists and statements are generalisations, but they serve to indicate real historical trends in the mass media.

Perhaps you can remember seeing magazines that show women confined to the kitchen and caring for children. Men who participate in household tasks often see themselves as “helping the wife out” or “lending her a hand”.

There are many situations when gender issues become part of the world of school, work and everyday practice. You can consider these:

- Girls may be denied a chance to advance their education.
- Females are offered only ‘feminine’ jobs.
- Certain jobs are advertised stipulating that only male applicants will be accepted.
- Salaries and promotions favour men.
- Some parents prefer having male children.
- There are fewer career opportunities for females.



Self-Assessment 2

How can you use language and communication in order to create gender balance and sensitivity?

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



Environmental Education

Studies in environmental education are becoming increasingly important. The emerging issues in this field of study are:

- sustainable development,
- conservation strategies,
- land degradation, and
- environmental pollution.

Language and the curriculum are changing to accommodate these emerging issues. Environmental issues feature prominently in the policy agenda of most countries.

Molebatsi and Toteng (1998: 1) state:

Concern with the environment received its widest publicity yet in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

(UNCED), commonly referred to as the Earth Summit, held in Brazil in 1992.

You might ask yourself why you need to teach environmental education. Carlsson (1992: 49), as cited by Toteng and Totolo, says that environmental education aims to:

- create an awareness about environmental issues and concerns among individuals about the environment, with its assets and problems;
- give individuals a basic understanding of the connection between human culture and the environment;
- create positive values, attitudes, feelings and concerns for the environment;
- equip individuals with skills that enable them to solve environmental problems;
- help students to evaluate the environment in a holistic way; and
- create a sense of responsibility regarding environmental problems and a willingness to act appropriately to solve these problems.

Many environmental issues are complex and difficult to grasp, therefore appropriate language must be used in order for students to be able to understand the issues and act accordingly. Environmental issues are many and differ from country to country.

Consider the environmental issues below. Review them and add others which relate to your country:

- limited mineral deposits
- limited water resources
- scarce arable land
- degradation of the land
- depletion of wood resources
- urban pollution
- air pollution
- over-utilisation of veld products.



Practice Activity

What measures can you take to conserve the environment in your area?

Possible answers to this question are provided at the end of this unit.



HIV/AIDS

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is threatening the existence of the human race. All nations are trying to find means of controlling the spread of the disease. HIV/AIDS is spreading especially rapidly in Africa, where accurate information is not easily available to all people. As a teacher, you are in a unique position to assist in disseminating correct and complete information to your students and the community. You can integrate HIV/AIDS information into the curriculum. Strategies that have been used include:

- educating students about HIV/AIDS;
- using radio, television, newspapers, pamphlets and posters;
- encouraging older students to follow safe sexual practices or to abstain; and
- distributing condoms to older students and adults (A notice in one newspaper says, “Be a hero. Save a life. Use a condom!”).

Human Rights

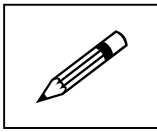
Another important issue, though not a new one, is human rights. Its inclusion in the curriculum is still at the planning stage. In Zimbabwe, for example, subjects such as English, history, geography, religious and moral education and Shona have been chosen as carrier subjects. Human rights will be included in the syllabuses of these subjects.

You cannot explain and illustrate the meaning of human rights without defining the language used to discuss this issue. Some key terms and concepts in the study of human rights are:

- United Nations (UN)
- shared views
- rights
- attitudes
- privilege
- universal
- international agreements
- UN convention
- violation.

Many cultures do not use these terms, or they use them in a way that is different from the way the United Nations uses them. In order to discuss any new subject, you must develop an appropriate vocabulary to express the ideas behind the subject. Then you and your students must agree about what

the terms mean. Finally, you must discuss how the ideas apply to your community.



Self-Assessment 3

How could you integrate the emerging issues of HIV/AIDS and human rights into your classroom activities?

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



Summary

This unit discussed five emerging issues:

- population education,
- gender,
- environmental education,
- HIV/AIDS, and
- human rights.

In the discussion, attempts were made to show the role of language in the curriculum. The unit advocates for the inclusion of these issues into the curriculum. As you went through the unit, we hope that you thought of ways of presenting these issues to your students.



Reflection

Design your own curriculum that integrates the teaching of the five emerging issues discussed in this unit.



Unit Test

Select two of the five emerging issues discussed in this unit and state any two goals related to these issues that you might promote in your classroom.

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



Suggested Answers

Self-Assessment 1

The points given here are suggestions. You can add your own, or you can design your own strategies.

In order to make people more aware of the problems caused by rapid population growth, you could:

- introduce the subject at school,
- involve students in outreach programmes so that they spread the knowledge,
- design posters and distribute them in the school and community, and
- invite family planning workers to hold lectures and demonstrations at school.

Self-Assessment 2

Below are a few suggestions that you could use to create gender balance and sensitivity.

- Use language that is gender neutral, for example, chairperson for chairman, spokesperson for spokesman, director of ceremonies for master of ceremonies and head of school for headmaster or headmistress.
- Remove gender bias in advertisements and posters.
- In class, give examples that are gender sensitive or neutral.
- Encourage children to play with all types of toys. Do not say that dolls are only for girls and cars are only for boys.
- Ensure that role-play activities are gender neutral.
- Ensure that the tasks given to boys and girls are the same, for example, sweeping the classroom or carrying water.
- Ensure that subjects are not biased towards a particular sex, for example, physics and woodwork for boys and sewing and cookery for girls.

Practice Activity

Some of the measures that could be taken to conserve the environment are:

- teaching the concept in school,
- promoting awareness campaigns,
- organising tree growing and tree care programmes,
- distributing pamphlets,

- promoting gully reclamation, and
- teaching about the negative effects of stream bank cultivation.

Self-Assessment 3

There are numerous ways that you can integrate emerging issues into the classroom. A few are presented below.

- Display materials about the issues on the classroom wall.
- Ask students to mount individual or group projects on the issues.
- Hold discussions that cover how the issues affect the students and their community.
- Invite experts or community members to speak to your pupils.

Unit Test

The goals you identified may differ from those stated below.

Population

- Control rapid population growth.
- Alleviate housing shortages.
- Make people aware of problems associated with rapid population growth.
- Control rapid urbanisation and its problems.

Gender

- Create equal opportunities for men and women.
- Create an awareness of gender biases.
- Develop language that has no gender bias.

Environmental Education

- Conserve natural resources.
- Make people aware of the need to protect their environment.
- Challenge people to devise new strategies in environmental conservation.

HIV/AIDS

- Educate people about the dangers of the disease.
- Change people's attitudes and behaviours towards people with HIV/AIDS.
- Educate people about methods of preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Human Rights

- Create an awareness of human rights issues.
- Educate people about their rights.

UNIT 5: The Process of Language Learning



Introduction

All the units you have covered in Modules 11 and 12 have focused on language and its use in one way or another. Module 11 discussed in detail the concept of L1 (mother tongue) and L2 (second language) and the order in which these two are learned. This unit covers the factors that are widely accepted as making the language learning process easier.

Objectives

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

1. Discuss the process of learning a language.
2. Explain the factors that make learning language difficult.
3. Discuss the personal factors involved in learning a second language.

Key Components in Language Learning

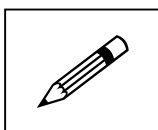
Below are brief definitions of terms that will be used throughout this unit.

- **Language learning** refers to the *conscious* process of studying and processing structures of a new language.
- **Language acquisition** refers to the *unconsciousness* process of learning a new language, generally the speaker's native language.
- **Second language acquisition** is the process of learning another language after the basics of the first or native language have been mastered.
- **Sequential language acquisition** is learning one language after another has been acquired.
- **Simultaneous or bilingual acquisition** is the acquisition of two languages at the same time, beginning at infancy.
- **Target language** is the language being learned or taught.
- **Linguistic creativity** refers to the ability of a speaker to manipulate the rules of grammar in a particular language for personal expression. It is a subconscious process by which language learners gradually move beyond the rules they have been taught in order to use the language creatively.

The Process of Learning a Language

Research in language learning has revealed that:

- What learners achieve does not depend on a curriculum; in other words, people can simply learn a language from those around them. This is especially the case for younger and less self-conscious students.
- There appears to be a pattern in the way new grammatical structures are learned by first language learners.
- The basic grammar of any language seems to be acquired unconsciously before the child can say a complete sentence.
- When children or adults begin to learn a new language, they go through an unconscious acquisition, or silent period, which lasts from a few weeks to several months. During the silent period, they take in a lot of words or structures but cannot construct sentences. It is believed that this period accelerates learning to speak the new language.
- Most second language courses require students to produce and practise sentences in the new language from the first day in class. The most beneficial language environment is one in which language is used naturally for communication. You could ask your students to use the language for natural communication in real-life contexts.
- Memorised dialogue and mechanical drills used in traditional language learning appear to do little to encourage the development of fluent conversation because language learners seldom refer to any structures learned through drills when they have to engage in conversation.



Self-Assessment 1

What types of language activities do your students enjoy doing most?

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



Factors That Make Learning a Language Difficult

Even when you provide a rich natural language environment and time for a silent period, some students may not learn what is presented in a lesson. At other times, students may correctly use structures that you did not teach. There are several possible internal factors that may produce such unexpected learning patterns.

- **Motivation.** When a student is exposed to a new language, the first internal barrier to learning is the individual's emotional state and motivation, that is, the feeling about learning the new language.
- **Models for emulation.** Some language learners consciously select certain types of people to emulate. For example, a learner who is impressed by American English, perhaps due to watching Hollywood films, would be less interested in learning British English.
- **Peer support.** Language learners might learn a language better if they work closely with peers who speak the target language, rather than with someone older.
- **Anxiety level.** Since language learning is so closely tied to facility in expressing thoughts and opinions, many people are afraid to learn a new language in case they look foolish and express themselves clumsily.

Barriers to learning a language include what Dullay, Burt and Krashen (1982) call the '**affective filter**' or simply the 'filter'. This filter acts to control entry to further mental processing of a new language. Once a learner overcomes the barriers referred to as the filter, there are two other sets of barriers. One is called the 'organiser', and the other is called the 'monitor'.

The **organiser** is a mechanical barrier that has to do with acquiring basic tools for language use. These tools are the rules of grammar. During this process, the new language is:

- organised according to the normal syntax, or word order for that language, for example, nouns followed by verbs in English, nouns followed by adjectives in French;
- characterised by small systematic errors, such as omitting small words such as the articles 'a' and 'the' in English, or confusing the use of the prepositions 'para' and 'por' in Spanish;
- organised into temporary constructions that function for communication, for example, "I go town."

While the organiser presents a mechanical barrier to language acquisition, the monitor presents a proscriptive barrier. The **monitor** is that part of our minds that tells us we cannot achieve something unless we have learned all of the rules properly. As such, it is a real barrier for those people whose desire to communicate is weaker than their desire to be correct.

About Errors That Language Learners Make

In the past, it was believed that errors made by those learning a second language were mainly due to the difference between the second language and the first language learned as an

infant. The first language learned is no longer believed to interfere with attempts to acquire the grammar of the second language. The only area where there is a noticeable influence of the first language is pronunciation.

Research suggests that frequent correction of grammatical errors does little to improve the proficiency in the second language. In fact, over-emphasis on students' errors may inhibit language learning.



Self-Assessment 2

As a teacher, what do you think are the factors that have led to difficulties in language learning among your students?

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.

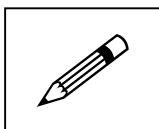


Individual Differences and Their Impact on Language Learning

The information presented below covers some of the personal factors involved in learning a second language.

- There is the common belief that children learn language better than adults. An adult learner does not learn language naturally but uses rules. Adults prefer a conscious approach. The child learner, however, learns language unconsciously in order to use it in his or her environment.
- The length of time the student has been learning a language also contributes to proficiency in speaking and writing.
- Children do not resist a language because it belongs to another culture. Adults, however, can be affected by the cultural aspects of the language.
- Children will try hard to fit in and speak like their peers. In so doing, they acquire pronunciation skills.
- Research has established that children are able to become proficient in their first languages provided that they are not born with a mental deficiency.
- Motivation is believed to influence the speed with which a language can be learned and the final success of learning. Motivation can be categorised into integrative and instrumental motivation. **Integrative motivation** may cause a learner to perform well because of a drive towards identifying with speakers of the target language. **Instrumental motivation** occurs when the learner has a functional reason for learning the language. For example, the learner may want to pass an examination or learn the language for a future career advancement.

- Learning might be affected by the learner's feelings towards the speakers of the target language, feelings towards learning a particular language and feelings towards learning languages in general.
- A self-confident, secure person is more successful at learning a second language than those who are less confident in themselves. Anxiety level and extroversion are employed to measure self-confidence. Lower anxiety levels and a tendency to be outgoing are associated with successful language acquisition. Learners with a high anxiety level have a disadvantage. They fear rejection or embarrassment and are likely to avoid learning situations.
- Learners who are prepared to guess before knowing all the correct language rules are likely to get involved when real communication in the new language is taking place.



Self-Assessment 3

Recently, a colleague from a neighbouring South African Development Community (SADC) country came to teach at your school. The colleague brought along two small children. After about two weeks, the children of the new teacher could communicate in the local language, but the parent could not construct a single grammatically correct sentence in your local language. Explain why there is a difference between what the children are able to speak and the lack of apparent progress made by their mother.

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



Summary

This unit introduced you to a number of concepts and issues related to the process of language learning. The unit covered the definitions of key concepts in language learning, the process of learning a language, factors that make learning a language difficult, how errors in language learning are handled and how individual differences affect language learning. Therefore, it has provided you with the skills that will help you develop strategies for teaching language easily. We hope that as you teach language, this new information will make your teaching both enjoyable and more effective.



Reflection

Reflect on your performance as a language teacher. Based on the insights gained from this unit, how would you improve your teaching?

?

Unit Test

Outline the strategies you would use to facilitate language learning in your classes.

Possible answers to this test are provided at the end of this unit.



Suggested Answers

Self-Assessment 1

Most students tend to enjoy activities that:

- allow them to have a say in what should be done,
- do not require them to answer orally if they do not want to,
- include strategies such as dramatisation and role play,
- are stimulating, and
- are related to their everyday lives and interests.

Self-Assessment 2

Difficulties in language learning may be due to:

- the learners' emotional state or uncertainty about whether they will learn the new language,
- the learners' reluctance to work with a particular group of people,
- a high level of anxiety,
- self-consciousness, and
- inhibition due to receiving frequent corrections about their errors.

Self-Assessment 3

A few of the possible explanations are presented below.

- The adult learner wanted to take time to know the rules of the local language first.
- The adult learner knew English or an alternative language, so she could afford not to learn a new language to communicate with those she spent the whole day with.
- The children did not resist the new language on the grounds that it was not from their culture.
- The children had to learn the local language to play with their new friends.
- The children's motivation to learn the new language was high.
- The children did not have any anxiety that they could not learn the new language.
- The children had a lot of confidence.
- The children found a relaxed rich environment among their peers where they could enjoy learning the new language without any embarrassment.

Unit Test

A few of the strategies that could be used to facilitate language learning are described below.

- Create an environment in which language can be used naturally for communication. Use role plays, dramatisations and simulations in class.
- Give learners time to internalise the language structures provided by the teacher before asking them to produce any oral language.
- Limit the drills in language teaching.
- As learners progress in learning the new language, correct their mistakes with care in a minimal way.
- Show learners why they have to learn a new language. This will help to motivate them.

UNIT 6: Language Planning, Literacy and Education



Introduction

This unit discusses the process of language planning, becoming literate and how learning a language can affect the education and life of the learner.

Objectives

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

1. Discuss the process of language planning.
2. Discuss the impact of language planning on literacy and education.
3. List the uses of language in education.
4. Explain how attitude can contribute to language learning.

Reasons for Language Planning

All governments conduct language planning exercises from time to time in order to:

- establish national norms for good writing and speaking,
- develop language as a tool for creative and scientific thinking,
- enhance understanding among various communities,
- determine the choice of language instruction in schools and the translation of literary works,
- identify a single language in which to exchange scientific knowledge, and
- provide a means by which the nation can identify itself.

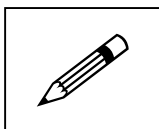
The Language Planning Process

There are four aspects of governmental language planning. Each is described below.

- **Norm selection.** One or more languages are selected and standardised using accepted spellings, lexicon and grammar.
- **Codification.** These standards are codified in published spelling books, dictionaries and grammar handbooks.
- **Functional implementation.** Efforts are made to ensure that the chosen language or languages are used widely by members of the society. Official pronouncements may be made to inform the public of

the new standards. Classes may be held for those who want to learn more about the language and modifications to the school curriculum may be made.

- **Functional elaboration.** Once the new standard is implemented, it is necessary to observe the degree of acceptance of the chosen language and to add items from time to time to keep abreast of the changing world. In order to keep the language functional, new terms and new or alternative spellings may be added as well as modifications to grammar.



Self-Assessment 1

From your experience as a teacher, what problems do you think have been solved by having your learners achieve literacy in their first language?

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



The Standard Language Uses

The language that has been standardised should be such that it can be used in all functions associated with the central government. The standardised language may be used in any of the following ways:

- in Parliament;
- in educational institutions as a medium of instruction and subject of study;
- in commerce, business and diplomacy;
- as a medium of communication between native and non-native speakers; and
- as a common, official or national language that can provide a link across any regional languages.

Language Policy

All countries have language use policies. These policies usually have some effect on education in the classroom.

The government policy on the official and national languages usually includes a section which:

- specifies who will use the language and how it will be used. For example, the government may require that the language be used in the media and in public and private schools;
- outlines what languages can be used in commerce, in communication and in contact with people from out of the country; and

- specifies the time to be allotted for language instruction, the choice of materials for teaching and teacher qualifications.

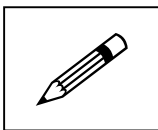
Language Policy and Literacy

Issues of language and culture can evoke extreme emotional reactions in the general population. Language is inextricably bound to culture. Language planning policy, therefore, always raises anxieties about attempts to create a single, artificial national culture based on an arbitrary language choice. People worry that replacing one language with another may be part of a plan to wipe out a whole culture. In addition, language planning can create real problems for students. Children who must take their education in a language they don't understand can fall seriously behind and become discouraged.

Despite all of these valid concerns, language planning is necessary in countries where there are many local languages. In general, governments take the approach that the positive results of bridging communication gaps within the country, and of more efficient communication in commerce and internationally, tend to outweigh internal difficulties in implementing the policy.

Often we think of language in oral terms. But we must also think of the importance of language in its written form. Print influenced the growth and distribution of knowledge by permitting the revision, updating and augmentation of standard works on geography and astronomy, as well as on plant and animal life. Print, therefore, has been a major factor in the creation of our modern world. It has helped us to advance scientifically and supported the evolution of modern literature.

When language policies change significantly, they can seriously affect the growth of society and the education of children, who learn from both verbal and written stimuli.



Self-Assessment 2

How does your country's language policy affect language learning and education in general?

Possible answers are provided at the end of this unit.



Problems Faced by Linguistic Minorities

Minority ethnic groups in most countries are usually disadvantaged by the process of language planning and government policy on languages. Their problems include:

- **Exclusion from the national community.** People must acquire proficiency in a selected language before they can function as full members of the national community.

- **Learning in a second language.** Children must learn to read and write a language that is not their first language. This can seriously affect their performance in school and, ultimately, their performance in the work place.
- **Divided loyalties.** In an effort to create language identity among a population that is divided into separate ethnic groups, each having strong sentimental attachments to its language and often with a history of intense conflict among them, many governments have established or pronounced that there be one official language. This policy forces individuals to choose between loyalty to their own ethnic group or loyalty to the central authority.

Language in Education

In education, the official or national language can be both a subject of study and the medium through which other subjects are taught.

There is a tendency among developing countries to move towards Europeanisation of the medium of instruction. Generally, English, French or Spanish is adopted as one of the official languages because these languages are found all over the world. It is therefore easier to conduct trade, to keep current with technological developments and to access resources such as medical textbooks and computers.

In the past, the history of a people together with their cultural practices were passed from generation to generation through oral language. Today, this type of information is in a written or digital form. Information can be passed via the mass communications media to a large number of people within a short time. Newspapers, radio, television, fax, telephone, electronic mail and the Internet are some of the ways that information about the history of a people and cultural practices can be passed from generation to generation. Although these media can distribute information rapidly, they can also be used to change the information and therefore change people's perception of the past. In schools today, one cannot overlook the effects, both good and bad, that media has on society. Children must learn to understand mass communications media and their effects on language, traditions and society.

One difficulty for African schools is that European languages have developed as part of written cultures. These cultures value a particular kind of knowledge and a particular way of passing that knowledge from one generation to the next. With recent changes in technology, the power of the European print media has been reinforced by analog and digital media such as television and the Internet. Knowledge and cultural practices of predominantly oral cultures have been damaged, and in some cases destroyed, by the effects of these Western technologies.

Schools in developing countries have a role and a responsibility to find a balance between helping to maintain local cultures and preparing children for a world dominated by a global technological culture that functions largely in English. One means of achieving this goal is to introduce the study of mass media into the curriculum in order to study their effects on language, tradition, and society.

Attitude and Motivation

In the past, people learned a language to survive – they needed to communicate with others in order to hunt, find water or ply their trade. Although communicating is still partly a function of basic survival, today learning a language is more often linked with other factors such as perceived competence and personal and academic self-esteem.

Learners may choose to use a language because they would like to identify with their peers from a prestige dialect community. As a result, they quickly achieve proficiency in the second language being learned.

Parents who believe that they may have been stigmatised because of their own language may be particularly eager for their children to acquire a standard language. They may value their local dialect in certain contexts but insist that their children develop skills in the language they perceive as having a higher status.

The way a teacher interacts and relates with students in a language classroom contributes a lot to learning languages. The teacher, through attitudes and interactions, can make learning a language an enjoyable and rewarding experience.



Practice Activity

Teachers have long asked themselves why some learners excel in a language subject but other learners who have similar backgrounds, academic preparation and experience struggle with it. How would you explain this situation?

Possible answers to this question are provided at the end of this unit.



Summary

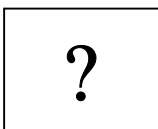
This unit has introduced you to the reasons for language planning, the language planning process, the use of standard language, language policy, problems of linguistic minorities, the role of language in education and how attitude can act as motivation for studying languages. We hope that as you perform your work as a teacher of language, you will understand the factors that make learning language difficult

and develop strategies to help students overcome these challenges.



Reflection

What was the relationship between your attitude and motivation and success in language learning as a student? Do you think that students in your class have the same attitude and motivation as you did? Do you think your experience as a language student could be used to help them?



Unit Test

In situations in which students must learn a second or third language at school, how can you carry out your teaching duties while respecting the languages and language varieties that students bring to the school? How can you enable students to achieve the linguistic mastery that will allow them access to both further opportunities and personal satisfaction?

Possible answers to these questions are provided at the end of this unit.



Suggested Answers

Self-Assessment 1

There is no single answer to this activity on problems solved by achieving literacy in the first language. However, you may wish to consider the following:

- Learning to read and write takes place quickly.
- Learners find it easier to understand concepts.
- Learners are able to have access to a lot of information.
- It becomes easier to teach second and third languages.
- It improves learners' attitude towards education.

Self-Assessment 2

Answers to this question will vary greatly and will be influenced by the language policies in the country in which you live. A few possible answers are provided below.

- The official or national language must be used as the medium of instruction.
- Pupils from minority groups have to learn how to speak a national language before they can learn how to read and write in that language.
- Pupils from minority groups are slower in internalising concepts in all subjects at the lower level of education because teaching is done mainly in the national language that they are still learning to speak.
- If all schools and teachers must use the same language, it is easier to develop and exchange teaching and learning materials.

Practice Activity

There is no single answer to this activity. However, you may wish to consider the following:

- The primary reason that some people excel in learning language and others don't is a matter of attitude and motivation.
- Learners achieve literacy quickly through their mother tongue; therefore, those who are being taught in their mother tongue excel.
- Learners who have access to a lot of information written in the language being taught may excel.
- The language being learned is also the language of instruction.
- Learners would like to identify with peers from a prestige community.

- Parents encourage their children because they feel they have been stigmatised for being deficient in a particular language.

Unit Test

You may consider using the following strategies when teaching second and third languages:

- Allow a little use of first languages in second language classrooms.
- Use knowledge from the first language to motivate students to learn second languages.
- Explain to the students why it is important to learn a second and perhaps a third language.
- Ensure that there are enough interesting materials in the language being learned.
- Get learners to participate in the formulation of school policies on language.
- Advocate literacy and the development of materials in minority languages.

UNIT 7: Communication in the Classroom



Introduction

In Unit 1 of this module, the different contexts within which communication takes place were discussed. In this unit, you will examine communication in the classroom in general. Also, you will be exposed to the skills of effective presentation that you need within and outside the classroom.

Objectives

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

1. Discuss the importance of communication in the classroom.
2. Identify appropriate language for your classroom interactions.
3. Explain strategies used for effective communication in the classroom.
4. Discuss appropriate questioning techniques.

An Introduction to Classroom Communication

As a teacher, you have your own understanding of what your role is in the classroom. You have expectations of how lessons should proceed, what activities to do and what questions to ask. The success of a lesson depends on how well it was planned and whether or not the intended outcomes were achieved. However, there may be a gap between what you want to achieve and what actually happens in the classroom.

The following are some of the characteristics of effective teachers:

- friendly, but firm;
- warm and understanding;
- organised;
- stimulating, imaginative and enthusiastic; and
- knowledgeable.

Effective teachers use language at a level suitable for the pupils' understanding and maintain the pupils' interest in order to motivate them.

Teachers normally assume a variety of roles, including decision-maker and communicator.

Your Role as a Decision Maker

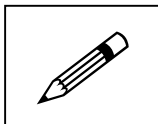
As a decision maker, the teacher:

- **Plans.** The teacher makes decisions about the pupils' needs and the most appropriate goals and objectives to meet those needs. The teacher also motivates the students and decides which strategies are to be used in instruction.
- **Implements.** The teacher implements decisions when interacting with pupils, using skills such as presenting, explaining, questioning and listening.
- **Evaluates.** The teacher decides which objectives to evaluate, which teaching strategies to use and how to determine if pupils are achieving what the teacher intended.

Your Role as a Communicator

The way in which the teacher communicates has an important influence on the classroom atmosphere. As a communicator, you must consider the following factors:

- **Verbal and non-verbal cues.** Are you using appropriate expressions, posture and gestures?
- **The use of voice.** Are you using the correct pitch, pronunciation and volume to convey the intended emotions and attitudes?
- **Listening.** Are you listening carefully to students' responses and contributions in order to give them an opportunity to express their views?



Self-Assessment 1

1. What role do you play in the classroom?
2. Make a list of the characteristics of an effective teacher.

Possible answers to these questions are provided at the end of this unit.



The Use of Language in Classroom Interaction

Much of the communication in the classroom involves sending, receiving and interpreting verbal and non-verbal messages. You spend most of the time presenting concepts and information to students through narration, description, explanation and questioning. The language that you use affects the language that your pupils will use, the interaction your pupils will have with you and with each other and hence the kind of learning that takes place. The care you take to make your own work free from error, coherent and interesting will serve as a model to the students for their work.

Affective Communication in the Classroom

Teachers should not ignore the significant emotional or affective content of what pupils are saying and doing. Pupils communicate their interest in the topic and the success of the teacher in teaching the topic via a number of non-verbal cues or signals. Students can indicate:

- boredom by:
 - slouching and turning slightly away from the teacher,
 - expressionless faces and eyelids that may be partially closed,
 - reluctance to join in classroom activities, and
 - fidgeting.
- interest by:
 - actively interacting in carrying out tasks,
 - sitting with the head slightly forward and turned toward the teacher,
 - having radiant faces, and
 - asking questions.

While teaching, you send verbal and non-verbal affective messages as well as receive them. Students respond to these messages. Through the use of both verbal and non-verbal cues, you can demonstrate that you are listening with care and empathy to what the pupils are saying to you. In that way, you can encourage pupils to share their thoughts and feelings with you.

You should monitor your classes for their non-verbal cues when teaching because they will indicate when a change of activity or a break is required.

How to Develop Effective Attending Behaviours

As you interact with your students, consider using the suggestions provided in this section.

Non-Verbal Cues

- **Eye contact.** Focus your eyes on your pupils.
- **Facial expression.** Be aware of your own expressions and the effect they may have on your pupils, who will pay close attention to your expressions. For example, a smile, a nod or a frown each convey a different message.
- **Body posture.** Your body can communicate both positive and negative meaning. For example, leaning toward the pupils indicates interest, while turning your back to them while they are talking shows disinterest

and disrespect. Do your body movements match the message that you wish to convey?

- **Physical space.** The physical distance between an authority figure and a pupil is important to consider. Ensure that there is a comfortable distance between you and your class. Remember that some students prefer greater distances than others do.

Verbal Cues

Pause before responding to pupils' questions. Pausing allows pupils to reflect on what they have said. It also encourages more participation. Do not pause for too long, however. You may want to use verbal reaction such as 'Mm', 'Yes' and 'I hear you' to show the speaker that you are listening.

Reinforcement

Reward desirable behaviour, as this reinforces positive behaviour and response. Positive reinforcements can be both verbal and non-verbal.

- **Verbal.** The most common positive rewards are one-word or brief phrase responses, such as 'good' or 'well done'. Praise not only changes behaviours, but also develops confidence and positive self-images that can help increase the pupils' desire to participate.
- **Non-Verbal.** Physical signals such as eye contact, facial expression and body posture or position can also send a message. All these indicate to the pupils whether or not the teacher is interested in what they are saying. A smile means 'good' and a nod means 'yes'. Pupils will respond differently to different types of reinforcement.

Using Criticism

Some students take criticism personally. You must indicate to pupils that you are responding to their classroom work or behaviour and not to the pupils themselves. That way you may be able to prevent reactions of resentment and withdrawal. For example, if a student gives a wrong answer, you can tell the student that the answer is incorrect in a way that keeps him or her interested in the discussions. You can also encourage the pupil to take another attempt at answering the question.

Calling on Non-Volunteers

Some students hesitate to volunteer for anything. There are many reasons for this reluctance to participate in classroom activities. Students may be shy, or frightened, sick or worried, or they may simply be unprepared or inattentive. Forcing such students to volunteer as a form of punishment is always a mistake. Ensuring that these students understand that you value their participation in class usually encourages them to join the activities.

You may want to call on non-volunteers in order to:

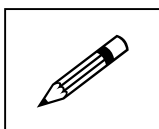
- provide an opportunity for you to reward participation by reinforcing the answers of students who are generally non-participants;
- prevent the monopolisation of class discussion by a limited number of habitual volunteers;
- check if the whole group is following the discussion; and
- call for a particular pupil's attention.

Discipline in the Classroom

Pupils may display undesirable behaviour in class, such as disobedience, lateness, truancy and aggression. The amount and type of undesirable behaviour that you encounter from your students relates directly to the type of leader you appear to be. A teacher may be authoritarian, laissez-faire or democratic. These leadership styles have an important bearing on discipline.

To maintain discipline in your classroom, you may want to consider the suggestions below.

- Be a good role model, as pupils learn by imitation.
- Help students develop a sense of self-worth.
- Do not intimidate pupils or vent your own worries and frustrations on them.
- Develop an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect in the classroom.
- Share both the power and responsibility in the classroom as much as is practical.



Self-Assessment 2

1. Why is it important for you as a teacher to consider both verbal and non-verbal communication in the classroom?
2. What are the factors to consider when maintaining discipline in your classroom?

Possible answers to these questions are provided at the end of this unit.



Lesson Presentation Skills

Below are some of the various teaching methods or strategies you can use in the classroom.

- **Lecture.** The teacher presents ideas, introduces topics and summarises the main points of the learning activity while the pupils ask questions. This teaching method maintains traditional power relations between teacher and students, and allows students little opportunity to control the learning.

- **Discussion.** This activity involves lots of feedback, and pupil participation is high, providing that the teacher facilitates the discussion rather than dominating it.
- **Demonstrations.** These are particularly important when students must later apply the skills being taught. Some students learn better by seeing a skill performed.
- **Excursions.** Educational trips not only provide students with first-hand learning opportunities, but also provide a break from normal routines, and so can refresh students' enthusiasm for school.
- **Project work.** Many children enjoy working on projects alone or in groups. Projects give them the opportunity to apply their learning in a concrete way, to expand a personal interest and to take some control over their own learning. Properly managed group projects can also develop students' teamwork and leadership skills.
- **Questioning.** Teachers need to handle questions carefully so as to encourage the pupils and ascertain their understanding of the topic under discussion.

As a teacher, you assume the position of presenter because you have to expose students to new concepts, facts and principles. As such, you need effective presentation skills. Review Unit 6 of Module 11 and also consider the items that are outlined below.

Introduction

Activities that precede a learning task have an influence upon the outcome of that task. Some of the functions of an introduction are to:

- focus pupils' attention on what is to be learned;
- progress from the known to unknown, or provide a transition;
- provide a structure or framework for the lesson; and
- explain a new concept.

Closure

At the end of a lesson, you need to bring closure by:

- reinforcing what has been learned by reviewing the key points of the lesson and relating them to material the pupils have already learned, and
- connecting what has been learned to what will follow.

During the course of the lesson, you may use closure to:

- end a discussion by summarising the main points,
- end a demonstration or lab activity by listing the steps carried out and the results and conclusions drawn,

- conclude an audio or video presentation by discussing the main points, and
- summarise a homework assignment reviewed in class.

Varying Stimulus

Effective teaching involves using a variety of methods of holding students' attention and interest. Alternate lectures with discussions and demonstrations. Ask guests to speak to the class. Use a variety of audiovisual aids in your teaching. Allow students to alternate sitting in traditional rows with sitting in different arrangements. Allow students to vary sitting with more physical activities.

Providing Clear Explanations

The best explanations are simple, explicit and clearly tied to each point of the lesson. If the explanation is properly constructed and delivered, students will remember the key points of the class. The most common form of explanation in teaching is instruction. Make sure that you give clear, precise instructions to students so that they are not confused.

Using Examples

Effective teachers have a large fund of examples on which to draw in order to help students understand new concepts. Not every example works for every student, so you must be able to draw on many variations in order to assist all of your students.

Examples can be effective if they:

- are simple and concrete,
- are relevant to the students' experience and levels of knowledge,
- illustrate or clarify a principle, and
- are vivid and engaging.

Using Questions in the Classroom

Asking questions is a major part of classroom interaction. Different types of questions stimulate different kinds of thinking. It is therefore important for you to know why you are asking a particular question and what sort of thinking you wish to stimulate.

Most questions can be classified as relevant to one of six levels of learning: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

Now let us look at these levels of learning and the words or expressions commonly used to ask questions at each level.

- **Knowledge.** Asking students to recall facts or information promotes self-esteem and a respect for detailed learning. Words often used in these questions are 'who', 'what', 'where', and 'when'.
- **Comprehension.** These questions help students to organise facts in a sensible way. Students learn to select information. Words used in such questions are 'describe', 'discuss', 'compare', and 'contrast'.
- **Application.** Asking students to demonstrate how to do something builds confidence and encourages them to connect the abstract or theoretical parts of their learning to the concrete. Words often used in such questions include 'apply', 'use', 'choose', and 'employ'.
- **Analysis.** Questions requiring analysis help students to remember, prioritise and organise information in order to search for cause and effect relationships. Analysis requires students to think critically. The word most commonly associated with these questions is 'why'.
- **Synthesis.** When students synthesise what they have learned, they form relationships between ideas and concepts. This is one of the most creative aspects of learning. Words commonly used in these questions are 'predict', 'produce', 'write', and 'develop'.
- **Evaluation.** This activity helps students to choose among alternatives according to a set of criteria. There are seldom any single correct answers to evaluation. Words commonly used are 'judge', 'assess', 'decide', and 'justify'.

Whenever you ask questions, consider the kind of thinking you require from your learners and then ask questions at the appropriate level. Also keep in mind that you ask questions to help your learners to focus and clarify their thinking.

Additional points to consider when asking questions:

- Questions should be used to teach and not to test.
- Questions should not normally have a wide range of possible answers. Focus your questions.

Questions can be divided into two broad categories:

- **Low-order questions** are usually knowledge and comprehension questions. Pupils recall information and the answers can be either right or wrong. For example, "What is Botswana's major export commodity?"
- **High-order questions** ask students to analyse, synthesise and evaluate information. Students must manipulate information in order to form their responses.

Their answers demonstrate their ability to think critically and make decisions. For example, “What do you think would happen to Botswana’s economy if the country stopped selling diamonds?”

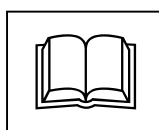
It is advisable to start with low-order and progress to high-order questions so that you stimulate pupils’ different thinking processes. This strategy allows the less able students to participate successfully at the beginning of the session and allows other students to prepare mentally for the more taxing questions that will follow.



Self-Assessment 3

1. Classify the questions below as R (recall), C (comprehension), Ap (application), An (analysis), S (synthesis) or E (evaluation). Write the answers in the spaces provided.
 - a. ____ Why is the most rapid population growth taking place in Africa?
 - b. ____ What was the percentage increase in population for the whole world between 1980 and 1990?
 - c. ____ In some countries the government takes specific measures to control population growth. Do you agree with this approach?
 - d. ____ Assuming that we wish to control population, what actions can private citizens take to control population growth?
 - e. ____ What is the meaning of democracy?
2. Categorise the following questions as low-order (L) and high-order (H). Write the answers in the spaces provided.
 - a. ____ Who is the President of Malawi?
 - b. ____ What is the price of a kilo of rice?
 - c. ____ Do you think that over-population will lead to mass starvation?
 - d. ____ How can we find out if a gem is a diamond?
 - e. ____ What is the difference between an acid and a base?

Possible answers to these questions are provided at the end of this unit.



Useful Questioning Techniques

Below are a few techniques that you can use when asking questions.

- **Pausing.** You should pause for a few seconds after asking a question and before asking a student to respond to it. This will give students enough time to think about their responses. The length of your pause

will depend upon the difficulty of the question and may indicate the care students should put into their responses.

- **Probing.** You can use a series of questions that will lead students closer to the final answer that you are seeking. Probing questions are designed to develop a student's initial response into a more adequate answer.
- **Prompting.** You can use a series of questions containing hints that will help pupils to develop their answers.
- **Seeking clarification.** Sometimes pupils give poorly organised responses that lack detail or are incomplete. You do not add information to their responses. Instead, you request the pupils to do so.
- **Reforms.** Pupils relate their responses to another topic they have studied.
- **Redirection.** This technique is used to improve the quality of participation. You redirect the same question to several pupils, but the question is neither rephrased nor repeated.

When using these techniques, the teacher's strategy is to lead pupils back to answering the original question.

Using Teaching and Learning Aids and Resources

Teaching and learning aids are used to support teaching and learning in the classroom. You can use them to make learning interesting and lively.

The following are some of the criteria to consider when selecting teaching and learning aids.

- suitability,
- visibility,
- clarity,
- ease of presentation, and
- availability of material.

It is advisable to use a variety of teaching and learning aids in your classrooms because learners react differently to different aids. Some of the commonly used ones include:

- chalkboards;
- graphic visual aids such as maps, graphs, charts, posters and diagrams;
- printed matter; and
- audiotape recorders.

There are also aids that are not commonly used in SADC countries:

- computers,
- television, and
- the Internet.

Let us consider some of the commonly used aids.

The chalkboard or blackboard. Although this has been called the teachers' best friend, it is sometimes misused. When using the chalkboard, there are some points to consider:

- Avoid long, crowded writing.
- Write legibly.
- Do not talk while facing the board.
- Write from left to right.

Graphic visual aids. Most pupils are visually oriented and respond well to graphs, charts, diagrams, posters, photographs, pictures, maps and globes. These materials can be used as the subject of a lesson or to enhance a presentation. Ask your students to collect graphic materials and bring them to school so that other pupils can learn from them.

Printed materials. Books and handouts are examples of printed text. Most teachers over-use duplicated materials. As a result, these learning and teaching aids lose their effectiveness. However, handouts are useful when you do not have enough textbooks or when textbooks cannot supply necessary information.

One of the major advantages of using instructional aids is that they help with class management. Students can become captivated and task-oriented when they receive materials that are interesting and relevant to the topic being discussed. Use learning resources to vary the teaching and learning routines you might have.

Acquiring Teaching Skills

In order to teach effectively, you may need to acquire and improve your teaching skills. You can do this by using any of the methods below.

- Study and observe the skill. Know the purpose of using it and how it will benefit your teaching and your students.
- 'Practice makes perfect' is a phrase used by many teachers. You need to practise because some skills are complex and cannot be learned without practice.

- Evaluation measures your success at using a particular skill. Obtain feedback from others, including your students, to help you improve your skills.



Summary

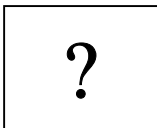
This unit has introduced you to communication in the classroom. Some of the presentation skills that you will need for effective communication inside and outside the classroom have been highlighted. These include the use of appropriate language, questioning skills and learning and teaching aids. The section on discipline should help you manage your class.

We hope that you will find this unit helpful in your interactions within your school. It will also assist you in your professional and personal development.



Reflection

Using the insight gained from this unit, how would you improve your communication skills? What three ideas could you apply immediately to your classroom situation?



Unit Test

Your colleague has been invited to present at a school-based workshop. What advice would you give her or him? Try to think of guidelines in addition to those suggested in the unit.

Possible answers to this question are provided at the end of this unit.



Suggested Answers

Self-Assessment 1

1. You may have given a variety of answers to this question. Perhaps you defined the teacher's role as that of:
 - a decision maker
 - a communicator
 - a guide or counsellor.
2. An effective teacher is:
 - organised,
 - imaginative and innovative,
 - knowledgeable,
 - understanding, and
 - respects the rights and needs of each pupil.

Self-Assessment 2

1. Verbal and non-verbal communication are important because they convey the emotions, attitudes and values of both the teacher and the students. Non-verbal signs are used to support verbal communication.
2. There are many considerations, but you may want to include the following in your answer regarding maintaining discipline:
 - be exemplary,
 - help students develop a sense of worth,
 - be democratic,
 - be friendly but firm, and
 - be fair and consistent.

Self-Assessment 3

1. a. An (analysis) d. S (synthesis)
b. K (knowledge) e. R (recall)
c. E (evaluation)
2. a. L d. H
b. L e. H
c. H

Unit Test

You might give the following advice to your colleague:

- Use both verbal and non-verbal cues.
- Do not speak in a loud voice or a voice that is dull and monotonous. Vary your pitch.
- Maintain eye contact with your audience.
- Use appropriate gestures and posture.
- Be aware of your facial expression.
- Make your introduction interesting. Relate it to your audience's needs and expectations.
- Use visual aids to complement or to clarify what you are presenting.
- Use examples to elaborate on or explain concepts and facts.
- Use a variety of both low- and high-order questions.
- Ask the participants to relate their experiences and tell them how the information that they are learning will address their needs.
- Be clear and concise.
- Repeat important points.
- Summarise the presentation.

UNIT 8: Identifying Communication Problems in the School



Introduction

In Unit 7 of this module, you studied communication and what it means to the teacher in the classroom. In this unit, you will explore means to identify communication problems in a school situation. Basically, there are two ways of doing this. The first is to analyse a problem that has already occurred in order to find out what caused it. The second way is to analyse the communication structures of the organisation and identify their strengths and weaknesses.

We will focus on the second method because we want to control our situation by causing things to happen rather than reacting to events. In other words, we want to be pro-active, rather than reactive.

Reactive responses to situations such as school strikes and demonstrations often lead to a negative climax if communication is not handled well. Poor communication may not be the cause of undesirable culminations such as hostility or violence, but it is usually a contributing agent. It is healthier and more strategic to create an organisational structure that promotes maximum communication. Without that structure, the organisation is likely to have communication problems.

This unit looks at the school as an organisation and outlines the ideal situation for effective communication.

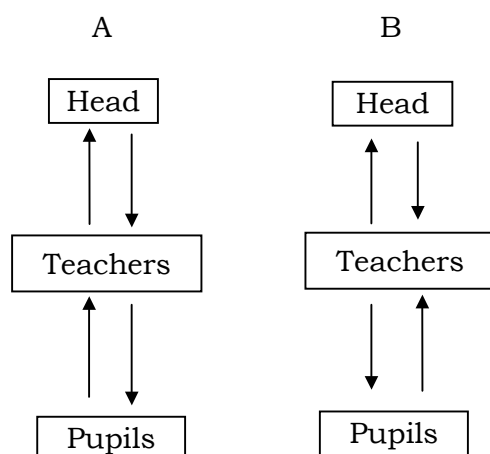
Objectives

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

1. Explain the communication relationships within the whole school.
2. Identify the strengths and weaknesses in the communication structure of your school.
3. Draw a relationship between school disturbances and communication.
4. Suggest solutions to communication problems.

The School as an Organisational Structure

Study the diagram below:



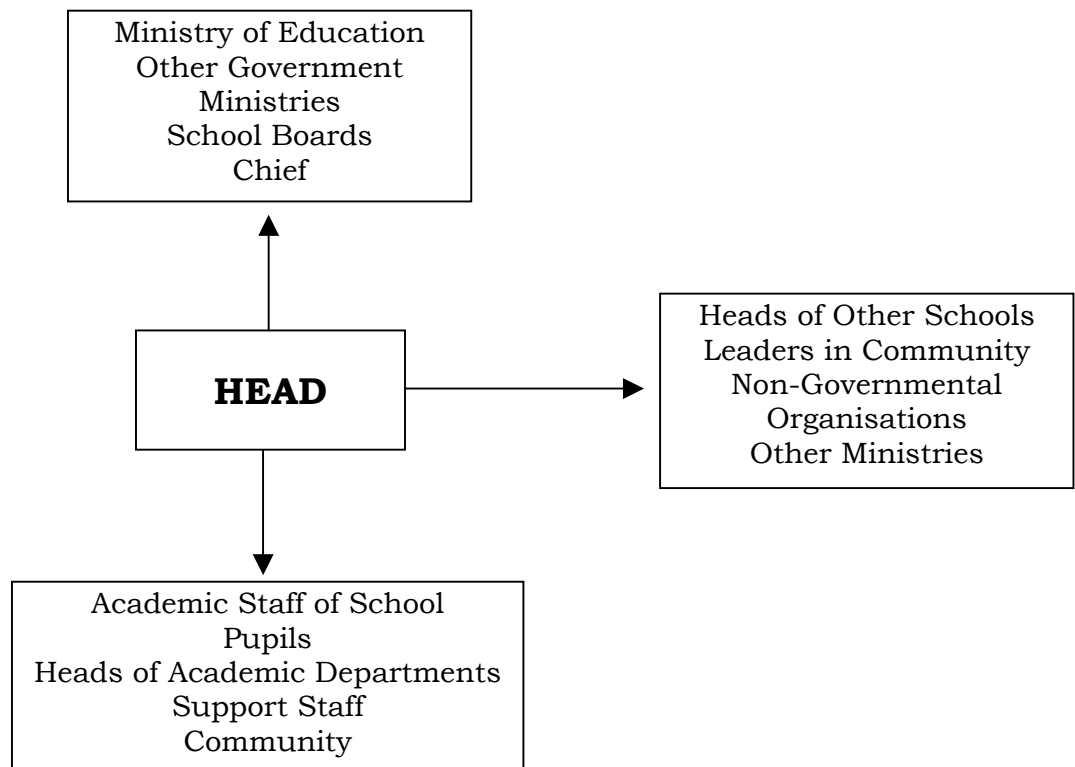
A and B are two schools. Each is led by a head below whom are teachers and students. There are people in other positions between the head and the pupils, such as the prefects, senior teachers and deputy head.

One purpose of the diagram is to show two extreme points. The other purpose is to show the direction of communication affecting all levels. You will note that from each category below the head, there are two arrows showing the direction of communication affecting the category. It should be understood that even above the head, there is communication to and from him or her. However, for the purposes of discussing the structures of a school, we will accept the head as the highest office.

You will also note that the school will handle both formal and informal communication. This means that some information will be taken through the formal channels and some will take informal routes. In other words, the school is a social unit.

Now let us look at provisions that are made for effective communication at each level. We start with the head.

Study the diagram below.



The head is the centre of communication. People and organisations which communicate to the head by transmitting information downward include:

- Ministry of Education officials,
- officials from other government ministries,
- the school board, and
- the local chief.

On the horizontal plane, the head has counterparts such as:

- heads of other schools,
- members of non-governmental organisations,
- heads of other ministries, and
- community leaders.

On the downward plane, information is conveyed to:

- school teaching staff,
- non-teaching staff,
- community members, and
- students.

If there are other persons or groups in your school system that are not listed above, add them in the appropriate box on the diagram.

We have already stated that the head must communicate with all of these people. The information that is passed to the relevant users may be in the following:

- statement of objectives,
- work plans with implementation timelines and personnel duties,
- budget and spending plans which coordinate with work plans, and
- provision for evaluation and feedback.

Depending on the head's style, this information is usually found in the office. Sometimes it is in a written form and placed on the notice board in the office. This is the first and crucial positive indication of communication. The next step is to ensure that the information is passed to all relevant users.

Before you consider the possible ways of passing this information, complete the task below.



Introductory Activity

A school has to have a budget. Indicate the roles or functions that you expect would be carried out by those who are above the school head and those who are at the same level as the school head.

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



How Is Information Passed?

Information is passed along formal and informal routes. Ideally, the formal route is for handling official communication. In order to communicate in any direction, the head may use written forms of communication more than oral forms. The head may prepare:

- memorandums to be sent to teachers
- reports to be sent to the head office
- school-based in-service programmes
- financial statements to be sent to donors
- reports to be sent to parents
- written rules for pupils
- written requests to be sent to the chief.

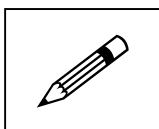
The selection of the mode is always influenced by the consideration of the target group. Official information may also be given using the oral mode. Information may be passed orally to parents, the chief, community members and even students. In short, the head may use any method to transmit the information. What matters is that the information must be passed to the people who need it and that the information must be understood.

Face-to-Face Communication

Face-to-face communication has many advantages. Therefore, it is advisable that the head use it where it is appropriate, as in the following situations:

- staff meetings with teachers
- committee meetings
- board meetings
- school assemblies
- general meetings with parents
- consultation days with parents
- staff social occasions.

Each occasion is an opportunity for the head to explain practices or policies which may need clarification. This is essential for team-building so that all those involved accept the plans and programmes as their own. This is called co-ownership of the school programmes. When members talk about the school activities, they will use the possessive, “our programmes”.



Self-Assessment 1

The head of your school has just held a 30-minute assembly to end the school term.

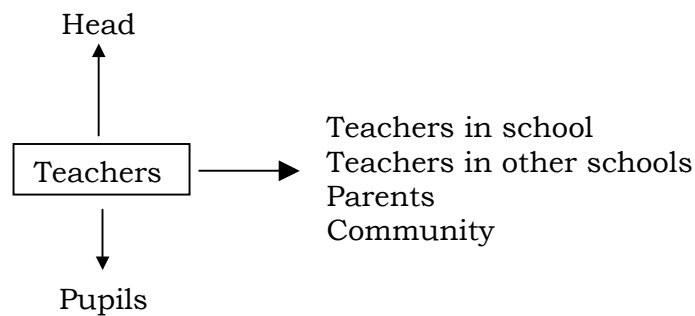
- Suggest three categories of people who will make use of information given at this assembly.
- For each category, suggest one thing the people may do in response to the information.

Suggested answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



The Teacher

If communication is effectively transmitted from the head to the teacher, and the teacher accepts the programmes as presented, the teacher will implement those programmes faithfully. From the teacher, information may be distributed as shown on the diagram below.



Note that the teachers' information to the head is a response to the head's communication made earlier. The information needed by the teacher generally includes:

- aims and objectives to be used in teaching,
- co-curriculum plans and involvement,
- staff development,
- teaching assignment,
- supervision, and
- role in the enforcement of rules and regulations.

Method of Communicating

Information moving upward normally uses the written form. The other two directions use whatever method the teacher feels is appropriate. Involvement with students is largely of a face-to-face nature. This contact with students makes the teacher a very influential person to them. They learn content and values and attitudes at the same time. The values and attitudes should include:

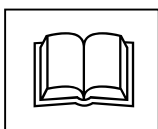
- honesty,
- loyalty,
- diligence,
- respect, and
- perseverance.

Due to the potential impact that the teacher may have on students, he or she must be careful in the selection and presentation of content. Care should also be taken to make positive impressions to strengthen the attributes generally accepted as good by society. The bottom line for communication is that the teacher should be seen to be part of the school and its vision.



Reflection

As a teacher, how have you contributed to the goals of your school? What areas have you neglected and feel you need to improve on?



The Pupil

The bottom rung in the school organisation comprises the pupils. It may be argued that this group is critical in determining levels and quality of communication. They are affected by the problems and omissions of those above them. Their behaviour may signal that communication failures have occurred. Unfortunately, the signals only indicate the existence of a failure and not the position or level at which it originated.

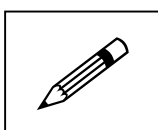
The Results of Poor Communication

Records show that many pupils have been involved in the following:

- strikes and demonstrations,
- writing of anonymous letters,
- spreading false information about the school and their teachers,
- vocal complaints,
- graffiti or writings on walls,
- unexplained absenteeism, and
- poor performance in examinations.

It is disturbing that when pupils are investigated after involvement in these activities, they complain about issues that may have been addressed at some level in the school. The head may have the information the students need to know, but because of poor communication in the school, it never reached them. This is why you are advised to note that information alone is not good enough. It must be passed on to the users. If people are not informed, the following may result:

- aloofness of staff from school programmes,
- a divided staff,
- an unstable staff,
- poor staff performance,
- general suspicion and lack of trust,
- general feeling of insecurity,
- lack of creativity,
- lack of loyalty, and
- lack of funding.



Self-Assessment 2

A parent of one of your students comes to school to complain about a holiday duty that his child was supposed to do at the school. The basis of his argument is that he was not informed about the duty. Therefore, he could not release the student.

You are the only teacher available, and you try to help. You check the notice board in the head's office and find the following information:

- a list of names including the student's name,
- the nature of duty during the holidays,
- the correct names and addresses of parents, and
- the date on which advice was to be sent out to parents.

Accepting that the parent is correct in saying that he was not informed about the activity and based on your knowledge of communication within a school, answer the following questions:

1. Suggest three points in your structure where the message could have been delayed or stopped.
2. What could have been done to avoid this situation?

Possible answers to these questions are provided at the end of this unit.



Grapevine

A **grapevine** is the unofficial communication system that is found in every organisation. A grapevine has the following characteristics:

- It is a structure that operates outside the official structure.
- It is informal.
- It communicates information.

If a grapevine is informal and unofficial but works in the same organisation that uses a formal structure, the question is, "What information does it use?" The grapevine acquires information from:

- confidential letters left carelessly on desks,
- remarks that are thoughtlessly or accidentally made,
- loud voices coming from behind closed doors, and
- sudden and unexplained changes in normal practices.

Grapevine information travels from person to person in the form of rumour. People who are most likely to believe it and pass it on are those who are:

- resentful,
- afraid,
- suspicious, and/or
- trouble-makers.

Grapevines are particularly prevalent in organisations in which communication channels are closed rather than open. They are used by all groups of people in an organisation, including very senior officers.

No strategies have been known to solve the problem of grapevine communication. However, where communication channels are open and communication is allowed to flow freely, grapevines have a very low profile. Therefore, if the grapevine is very active in a school, there is likely to be a communication problem.



Self-Assessment 3

Give three reasons why it would be difficult for a school head to eliminate a grapevine.

Possible answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



Summary

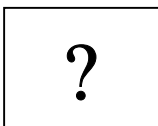
This unit has given you some ideas on how to predict communication problems by carefully looking at the structure of your school. It also underscored the importance of having a structure that is both useful and operational. The importance of two-way communication and feedback was highlighted as well.

You should now feel more competent to detect and to avoid situations that are the result of poor communication. But, most importantly, you should be able to identify yourself as a member of the school team whose tasks include creating a positive communication environment in the school.



Reflection

Reflect on your contribution to creating a healthy communication environment in your school. Could you do more?



Unit Test

Suggest how the following individuals can help a school to have a healthy communication environment:

- the head
- the teacher
- the student.

Possible answers to this question are provided at the end of this unit.



Suggested Answers

Introductory Activity

Those who are above the school head:

- check for progress,
- compile reports,
- decide on funding,
- conduct routine budget checks,
- balance books, and
- give advice.

Those who are at the same level as the school head:

- provide information,
- decide on funding,
- get advice, and
- give advice.

Self-Assessment 1

The groups of people identified below may use the information in the ways indicated in the right column.

- students - pass information to parents
- teachers - prepare for new term
- prepare to clarify information for parents
- parents - prepare to provide for their student sons or daughters
- prepare to go to the school to seek further information
- prepare to pay fees

Self-Assessment 2

1. The message could have been stopped by or at the:
 - head's office,
 - teacher,
 - mailing desk, or
 - student.
2. The head could have:
 - delegated the task of informing parents to someone else,
 - sent a reminder, or
 - made an announcement at the assembly.

Self-Assessment 3

It may be difficult to eliminate a grapevine because:

- it has no formal or official structure,
- users are difficult to identify,
- it operates secretly, and
- the information may have some elements of truth.

Unit Test

In order to establish a healthy communication environment, each person identified below can act as indicated.

Head

- Have clear plans.
- Draft clear objectives.
- Communicate to all appropriate people.
- Talk about plans and objectives at meetings.
- Provide for feedback.
- Accept feedback and act on it.

Teacher

- Have clear plans and objectives.
- Involve students in plans.
- Communicate effectively with others.

Student

- Speak freely about problems.
- Seek clarification.
- Be part of the school programmes.

Module Test

1. Discuss a situation in which you would communicate the same information differently to different people. Explain why you would communicate in this manner.
2. Some researchers state that language and culture are intertwined. Language is a result of the culture as a whole. It is also the vehicle by which other facets of culture are shaped. Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer.
3. Why do languages change? What forces them to change?
4. Define language learning as opposed to language acquisition.
5. Describe the environment in which second language learning takes place most effectively.
6. Should teachers correct every error made by language learners as quickly as possible? Why or why not?
7. What would motivate your learners to participate actively in learning a second language?
8. What strategies has your school adopted to ensure fluency in the speaking of the second language taught in your school?
9. Communication involves passing on information. Give examples of what can happen if information is not communicated between the school head, teachers and students.
10. You are planning a lesson. What communication skills would you use in presenting your lesson? Give reasons why you would use those skills.
11. Describe a situation in which you experienced communication problems while trying to communicate some information to your class. How would you or did you try to overcome the problems?
12. Explain how a programme can be co-owned by the head, teachers and pupils.
13. Describe the six levels of questioning you could use in a lesson. Provide an example of a question for each level.
14. What emerging issues were discussed in this module? Give a reason for including each issue in the curriculum.

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